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STATE FOR EUR/RPM, EUR/UBI

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/04/2016

TAGS: [MARR](#) [PREL](#) [LE](#) [NL](#)

SUBJECT: NETHERLANDS/LEBANON: DUTCH SEE POTENTIAL NICHE  
ROLE IN INTERNATIONAL FORCE

REF: A. "POLITICS IN THE NETHERLANDS" - 8/4/06

[1](#)B. "POLITICS IN THE NETHERLANDS" - 8/3/06

Classified By: CDA Chat Blakeman, reasons 1.4 (b,d)

[1](#)1. (S) Summary: Officially, the GONL continues to state that Dutch forces are "stretched too thin" in current operations in Afghanistan, Africa, and the Balkans to make a meaningful contribution to a possible International Force (IF) in Lebanon. But MFA Deputy Head for Conflict Prevention Joop Nijssen acknowledged the Dutch are privately reviewing the possibility of a small, niche contribution to the IF. Nijssen stressed that such discussions were "theoretical" in nature, and that the Dutch would first "wait and see" what the UN decides regarding the IF before initiating any firm force generation options. Nijssen discussed this possibility with polmiloff on August 5. End summary.

[1](#)2. (S) Nijssen stressed that the Dutch official position -- as indicated by Foreign Minister Bot and Defense Minister Kamp -- is that the Dutch are "stretched too thin" in operations in Afghanistan, Bosnia, and Africa, and the NATO Training Mission in Iraq (NTM-I), to be able to contribute to the International Force (IF) in Lebanon (see para 6). DM Kamp repeated this position in an interview with the Dutch newspaper Telegraaf on August 4 (ref b).

[1](#)3. (S) Nijssen acknowledged, however, that the GONL is privately "reviewing possibilities" for a small, niche contribution to the IF. He explained that while DM Kamp opposes Dutch involvement in the IF, FM Bot "sees some openings" for Dutch participation. Nijssen noted that the Dutch MFA and MOD met August 4 to discuss IF contribution possibilities. According to Nijssen, Dutch CHOD Gen. Berlijn presented several possible options, including a company of Dutch marines and/or air support. The most "intriguing" option, Nijssen suggested, would be a Dutch maritime component to the IF. For example, if the IF was asked to perform a naval blockade, he said the Dutch would be "very interested" in participating. Finally, Nijssen said the Dutch might be interested in training Lebanese troops; FM Bot mentioned this possibility in the press on August 3 (ref b).

[1](#)4. (S) In a separate conversation, senior MOD officials reiterated Dutch policy to DAO August 5 that Dutch forces are "stretched too thin" to contribute to the IF. These officials noted that Dutch air support was "definitely out,"

while the GONL would be hard pressed to contribute ground forces with current International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) rotations in Afghanistan. They confirmed, however, that a Dutch naval contribution to the IF remains a possibility.

¶5. (S) Nijssen reiterated that Dutch participation was "theoretical," and that the GONL was not/not "actively pursuing" any force generation options, but merely performing a "technical review". He said the Dutch were adopting a "wait and see" approach to discussions in New York. Once the UN decides what the IF will entail, only then will the GONL seriously look at contribution options, Nijssen said.

¶6. (U) NOTE: According to the Dutch MOD website, the following Dutch troops are currently deployed worldwide:

-- 2,031 troops in Afghanistan as part of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF)

-- 70 troops in Africa as part of EUPOL, EUFOR, UNMOC, IMAT, AMIS, and UNMIS

-- 289 troops in the Balkans as part of EUFOR, EUPM, NATO HQ, KFOR, Deliberate Forge

-- 6 troops in the Arabian Gulf as part of CTF-150

-- 15 troops as part of the NATO Training Mission in Iraq (NTM-I)

-- 30 troops in the Middle East as part of UNTSO

BLAKEMAN